



JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION
CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

INSPECTION REPORT

May 26, 1993

Inspecting Commissioners: Ruth Cowan & Georgia Bates Creel
Facilities Committee Members

DOCUMENTS DEPT.

JUN 11 1993

SAN FRANCISCO
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Inspections and Interviews.

On May 19, 21, 22 and 23, 1993, members of the Juvenile Justice Commission toured and inspected the operations of San Francisco's Juvenile Hall. The commission members who conducted the inspections were Ruth Cowan and Georgia Bates Creel, members of the JJC Facilities Committee. On May 19, Mrs. Cowan was accompanied by Ms. Jill Wynns, of the San Francisco School Board. The following observations were developed during the four visits.

5/S



San Francisco Public Library

Information Center
San Francisco Public Library
1000 Market Street, 5th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102

REFERENCE BOOK

taken from the Library

San Francisco in mid-February persists. The inspecting commissioners in the hall ranged from five to ten students (25% to 50%) as portrayed in the reports of the facility logs and by way of the following negative effects:

Age disruptive resident behavior is strained to the limit. One was assaulted and strangled, and the following day, May 1993, the city unit experienced a disturbance so serious that the San Francisco Police Department was required.

Quality of fundamental service delivery—i.e., sleeping two students in two rooms, movement of groups through out the facility—has been negatively affected.

The facility's operations. The staffing problems have reached a point where the facility is reluctantly granting vacation leaves, and is ordering staff to provide excuses for staff who refuse. Pertinent to the staffing problems:

Supervisory level staff is in short supply as a result of work administration is being forced to drop lower and lower into the ranks to appoint acting supervisory staff.

Over time, and an administration-declared ample non-emergency

civil service list, shifts go unfilled repeatedly.

- Staff complaints in the administrative logs regarding unfilled shifts and shortages are once again increasing.
- Basic cleanliness and orderliness in the facility has been negatively impacted.
- Clothing items, particularly for female residents were observed to be in short supply on each of the days that the facility was inspected.
- Several staff, who had worked back-to-back shifts appeared to be exhausted and confessed to being not as alert. One staff member complained that he felt the possibility of staff being injured was increased when staff were compelled to work the back-to-back shifts.
- Staff injuries appear to be at a troubling level.

Disruptive Behavior

Inspecting commissioners noted an increase in calls for response to disruptive behavior as "conditions" reported in the administrative logs. The commissioners were unable to determine whether the reporting reflected an actual increase in disruptive behavior. Conditions done earlier in the year revealed staff comments that some reporting of conditions was not being executed. The commission was unable at the time to substantiate such claims. If





JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

INSPECTION REPORT

May 26, 1993

DOCUMENTS DEPT

JUN 11 1993

SAN FRANCISCO
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Inspecting Commissioners: Ruth Cowan & Georgia Bates Creel
Facilities Committee Members

Inspections and Interviews.

On May 19, 21, 22 and 23, 1993, members of the Juvenile Justice Commission toured and inspected the operations of San Francisco's Juvenile Hall. The commission members who conducted the inspections were Ruth Cowan and Georgia Bates Creel, members of the JJC Facilities Committee. On May 19, Mrs. Cowan was accompanied by Ms. Jill Wynns, of the San Francisco School Board. The following observations were developed during the four visits.

Overcrowding

The overcrowding trend which began in mid-February persists. The inspecting commissioners observed that most of the units in the hall ranged from five to ten students (25% to 50%) overcrowded. The overcrowding, as portrayed in the reports of the facility logs and by way of first hand observation, is having the following negative effects:

- The staff's ability to manage disruptive resident behavior is strained to the limit. On May 21, a counselor was assaulted and strangled, and the following day, May 22, the maximum security unit experienced a disturbance so serious that the presence of the San Francisco Police Department was required.
- According to staff, the quality of fundamental service delivery—i.e., sleeping two residents in single resident rooms, movement of groups through out the facility and on-unit responsiveness to normal resident problems—has been negatively impacted.

Staffing

Staffing shortages again plague the facility's operations. The staffing problems have reached a level where the administration is reluctantly granting vacation leaves, and is ordering staff to work overtime, and requiring medical excuses for staff who refuse. Pertinent to the staffing shortages are the following observations:

- Permanent, certified, supervisory level staff is in short supply as a result of work related injuries. The administration is being forced to drop lower and lower into the counseling ranks to appoint acting supervisory staff.
- Even with involuntary overtimes, and an administration-declared ample non-civil service list, shifts go unfilled repeatedly.
- Staff complaints in the administrative logs regarding unfilled shifts and shortages are once again increasing.
- Basic cleanliness and orderliness in the facility has been negatively impacted.
- Clothing items, particularly for female residents were observed to be in short supply on each of the days that the facility was inspected.
- Several staff, who had worked back-to-back shifts appeared to be exhausted and confessed to being not as alert. One staff member complained that he felt the possibility of staff being injured was increased when staff were compelled to work the back-to-back shifts.
- Staff injuries appear to be at a troubling level.

Disruptive Behavior

The inspecting commissioners noted an increase in calls for response to disruptive behavior known as "conditions" reported in the administrative logs. The commissioners were unable to conclude whether the reporting reflected an actual increase in disruptive behavior. Inspections done earlier in the year revealed staff comments that some reporting of conditions was not being executed. The commission was unable at the time to substantiate such claims. If



there is an increase in disruptive behavior, and the assistant director of the facility, expresses the belief that there has been an increase, the question becomes, how much of an increase. Gang tensions appear to be exacerbated by the overcrowding. With a unit closed by administrative fiat, shrinking the capacity of the hall down from 132 rooms to 112, the separation of conflicting groups is made exceedingly difficult, according to staff.

Administrative Record Keeping

The administrative logs reflect an uneven pattern of recording the daily operations in the facility. The assistant director was consulted and present during the review of one of the logs in which reporting deficiencies were observed. The inspecting commissioners noted that there are several new logs which have been added to the recording group.

Visit to Multi Media Center

The inspecting commissioners found the center, formally a resident cottage, to be clean and equipped with video arcade games, board games and other recreational entertainments. A commissary, providing candy and soft drinks, was being started, and provided the opportunity to purchase those items with monies made working in the facility. Work assignments are delegated to residents who are doing well in the program.

References in the administrative logs indicate that staffing shortages have caused closure of the unit from time to time (i.e., Mother's Day weekend and other occasions). The inspecting commissioners wonder what effect these closures have on the intended behavior modification.

The Educational Program

The Principal of Woodside Learning Center has reported to the inspecting commissioners that she has had concerns for the safety of her staff and the residents in Unit B-5 for several weeks. Since the May 22 disturbance in the unit, classes for residents detained therein have been cancelled (and were not being held as of this date). The teaching staff is expressing grave concerns for their safety. The inspecting commissioners are once again noting an increased pattern of class cancellations due to unsafe or disruptive conditions in the units of the facility.

The Woodside Learning Center Principal has requested a meeting with the administration and staff of the facility to discuss the delivery of educational services in a safe environment. A preliminary meeting with the facility director has occurred as of this writing. A joint meeting of the school and facility staff is scheduled for the afternoon of May 26.

Conclusions

The reporting commissioners are convinced that their observations are not temporary aberrations. The May 22 disturbance and resulting destruction in Unit B-5 are symptomatic of a long range pattern of overcrowding, staffing shortages and administrative shortfalls. The commission is concluding a detailed study of problems which occurred in the facility during the fall of 1991 and winter of 1992. While there has been commentary by observers, CYA consultants and youth advocates, during the ensuing period, which identified improvements in the facility's operations, the present long term trends are as troubling as any which the commissioners have observed in the last half decade.

Recommendation

The inspecting commissioners are calling for a larger and systematic set of inspections of the facility's operations. Participation of the Juvenile Court is imperative. In addition, the Juvenile Probation Commission should be invited to participate in the inspections. There should not be any delay in getting the eyes of significant juvenile justice decision makers upon the conditions which presently are in existence in the juvenile hall of the City and County of San Francisco.



